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## NEW KNOWLEDGE OF FORESTRY

A radio talk by R. Y. Stuart, Chief Forester, U. S. Forest Service, delivered through WRC and 39 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, December 11, 1930.

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To fulfill their mission effectively, government agencies must have aims and policies.

The Federal policy of forestry has been developing in the United States for sixty years, adapting itself gradually to the changing needs of the country. Step by step forward, aiming for the best use and conservation of the forest resources of the nation, the advance of forestry has amounted to a gradual unfolding of a national purpose.

When we speak of forestry we mean putting into practice those methods of managing and protecting forest lands that will insure their permanence through continuing crops of timber.

The practical need of forestry has been made clear. The American people have come to hold that forest destruction and waste is undesirable and injurious to public welfare. There is also strong popular belief that forests should be restored to lands stripped of trees and not needed for other uses.

That is plain common sense. But for over one hundred and twenty million people living and laboring in such a variety of regions and differing so widely in interests to come to a practically unanimous view in a single lifetime is a great achievement.

A broad and deep-seated belief now exists that if the forests are allowed to vanish the national welfare will suffer. Forestry must not merely protect the supplies of wood and water, but must meet a host of other human needs. So broad is the field, that the national interest is affected, and there are certain portions of this service that can and should be undertaken by the Federal government.

Stated briefly, the aim of the Federal forest policy is to bring about the highest use of the forest as one of the country's greatest basic resources. This objective has been defined from a public angle as "the greatest good to the greatest number in the long run."

Under long-prevailing customs of mal-adjusted use, men have been taking what they need from the forest without provision for forest perpetuation. To build up a better method to meet the needs of the forest situation in all regions, is a task so big, that it may be compared to the historic building up of the great body of agricultural knowledge and practice upon which our national farming industry rests today.

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Manifestly, a national agency is called upon to take the lead. The Forest Service as the National agency designated has attempted to meet this duty for 25 years, not only by operating in fields distinctly National but in fullest co-operation with the States and others working toward the same great end.

The correlated use of forest resources has been demonstrated on the national forests. Improved forest practices are steadily finding application on other forest lands. But there still remain large areas of forest lands in need of a sound system of management and protection from fire. Again, millions of acres of cutover lands are fast becoming a public liability, and forestry practice alone can put them to beneficial use.

Our report this year shows that although few of the legislatures met, the year has been marked by notable progress in State forestry. Forest protection organization has made good headway. State land tax laws have been changed in some cases to encourage timber cropping instead of stripping everything off the land and letting it go tax delinquent, with disastrous results to communities.

New York, Virginia, Wisconsin, Georgia, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and some other States made notable advances in forestry legislation. Texas voted 25 thousand dollars to buy virgin pine forest lands.

The federal government increased its cooperation with the states during the year. It contributed more than one and a half million dollars to help the States in fire protection, forest tree distribution, and farm forest extension work. On twenty-one thousand more farms, improved forestry methods were adopted during the year. Millions of new acres came under some degree of fire protection. State and Federal agencies furnished more than 25 million trees for planting, putting some 25 thousands acres back to producing forests.

Fire protection on the 149 national forests was greatly improved in organization, equipment, and roads during the year. On account of added efficiency, more facilities and excellent cooperation, from many sources, fires on the national forests were cut to about one-fifth of the acreage burned in 1929.

Twenty-five years and more ago fires burned every year almost without restraint over thousands of acres of national forest land. Present protection is holding the burned area on most of the forests to less than one per cent. Twenty-five years ago there was no organized fire detection system on the national forests. During the present season more than fourteen hundred watchmen were assigned to duty in lookout stations and towers. Thirty-seven thousand miles of telephone lines are now in use.

In the old days most local residents took no regular part in detection and suppression. And it is recognized by the foresters that effective fire protection is impossible without the cooperation of local residents and forest visitors.

Opening over 300 new free public camping grounds with improvements for the use of forest visitors, the Forest Service increased recreation facilities in the

national forests. Something over 30 million people visited the forests as tourists, campers, picnickers and sightseers last year.

Big game animals and small wild life on the national forests showed gratifying increases. There are now more than two-hundred and fifty state and federal game refuges within the one-hundred and forty-nine national forests. Live stock interests are well served, too. Under Forest Service permit 13 million head of livestock were grazed on the national forests the past season.

Carefully supervised grazing on the national forest ranges has improved the forage in recent years, and quality and weight of the animals have been improved. Natural reseedling of ranges has been promoted, and erosion on national forest lands is being reduced. Continued research is being carried on by the Forest Service looking to the constant improvement of range management methods.

A step forward was taken recently, when the Secretary of Agriculture approved the establishing of new Experimental Forests, Natural Areas of virgin forests, and Primitive Areas for recreation and preservation of the wilderness type of forest. These are to be chosen in representative forest regions throughout the United States and Alaska. Three new primitive areas were approved in Oregon last month. Education will be served, and citizenship will retain the inspiration of early days of the Republic, through the enjoyment and study of representative virgin forests.

Heartening to the foresters, to the public, and to the cause of employment, is the expenditure of an additional five million dollars this fiscal year for new forest highways. Many more roads are needed, however, to make the national forest areas more accessible for use and to aid in fire prevention and suppression. Whole townships in some of the forests still have no roads of any kind.

The experiments station and the Forest Products Laboratory at Madison, Wis., have gained new knowledge this year of the methods for growing and using wood. Better drying, painting, and gluing methods, needed in housings, industry and in aviation have been demonstrated and the methods published. Better pulping methods and turpentine practice, are offered. Soil erosion studies and taxation studies have continued, and the first great survey of all the timber resources of the United States was initiated.

It is possible to cover by a few phases of the Forest Service work in a brief report like this. One of the outstanding things we have noted is the advance in forest-mindedness of the American people, and their desire to support forest conservation. Forests are now definitely recognized as the one great renewable natural resources of the United States. That they will win even more attention from year to year seems assured.

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